



H1N1 Virus Partner Briefing

Influenza A (H1N1) Virus

July 22, 2009, 3 p.m.

Rhode Island: 192 confirmed positive cases, 69 hospitalized to date, 2 deaths
National Report: 55 states (including DC, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands) with 40,617 confirmed and probable cases, 263 deaths
International Report: 94,512 cases, 429 deaths (WHO is no longer updating numbers)

Officials anticipate that the attack rate for H1N1 Influenza will increase this fall, with approximately 30% to 50% of the population getting sick nationwide. The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) expects to see a similar increase in the number of Rhode Islanders experiencing mild illness or requiring hospitalization from H1N1. A rise in the H1N1 attack rate will likely increase the demands on the state's healthcare system this fall. Hospitals and healthcare providers will need to balance the treatment of H1N1 with the treatment of seasonal flu and routine activities. There are many ways that you can plan for the expected rise in state-wide healthcare demands. HEALTH recommends that all Rhode Islanders take steps to be prepared and protect well-being:

- **Find a primary care provider or medical home**, if you have not yet identified one. It is good to establish a relationship with a medical provider ahead of time, so you know where to turn before you get sick. If you need to find a provider or medical home, HEALTH recommends taking the following steps:
 - Contact your local hospital. Hospitals can often refer you to area physicians.
 - Speak with friends and family to see where they receive their medical care.
 - Check with your insurance carrier to see which doctors are covered by your network.
 - Look in the phone book for physicians working in your area.
- **Make sure the management of your healthcare issues is current**, especially if you have chronic underlying health conditions. If you require regular laboratory work, diagnostic tests, or therapy services, or if you need a doctor to evaluate your medication dosages, make sure that you schedule these services now. It may be harder to schedule an appointment this fall if doctors and medical facilities are busier.
- **Have an adequate supply of prescription medications on hand**. This will ensure that you have the medication you need if you get sick and are unable to travel to your doctor or pharmacy for refills. Even if you don't get sick this fall, it may take longer to schedule an appointment at your doctor's office. Pharmacies may take more time to process refills if more people need prescriptions filled. You can check with your insurance carrier about the possibility of receiving several months' prescriptions at one time. For example, some insurance companies will allow you to receive multiple monthly supplies through the mail.
- **Register for the Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry**. The Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry was designed so there is a reliable system for the identification of Rhode Islanders who require special assistance during an emergency. The information provided will be shared with state and local emergency management and first responders such as police or fire. For information or to learn how to enroll in the emergency registry, visit <http://www.health.ri.gov/pandemicflu/swineflu/FAQ/SpecialNeedsRegistry.pdf>

Additional Resources

HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>; H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022

CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

WHO at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>